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SUBJECT: CLUSTER MUNITIONS; PORTUGAL ON THE GGE AND GERMAN
TEXT

REF: SECSTATE 164503

¶1. (SBU) Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Director for Security Pedro Sousa Abreu requested a meeting with us December 10 to review discussions on cluster munitions. At the meeting, we were asked point-blank if the U.S. objected to Portuguese Ambassador Jose Julio Pereira Gomes, Portuguese Permanent Representative for Disarmament in Geneva, as chair of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on cluster munitions. Sousa Abreu said the Portuguese delegation had heard such a rumor at recent meetings in Vienna. He said Pereira Gomes is the EU candidate, the Greek having withdrawn his candidacy in favor of EU consensus. Sousa Abreu said that, as the EU had a consensus candidate, Portuguese, British, French, and German ambassadors in Washington intended to make a demarche on the subject in the Department, but he wanted to give us advance warning. Sousa Abreu also passed us a diplomatic note confirming Ambassador Pereira Gomes' candidacy (informal translation below).

¶2. (SBU) Sousa Abreu also noted, without prompting, that he had consulted with the Germans regarding the existing German text. Sousa Abreu said the Germans confirmed they had received "objections from many nations" and were revising the text substantially. Sousa Abreu also said the German MFA admitted they had drawn up the text themselves and had not yet cleared it with the German Ministry of Defense, who they expected would have many of the same objections as the "other nations."

¶3. (SBU) For their own part, Sousa Abreu volunteered that the Portuguese wanted to keep the GGE discussions independent of the Oslo Process and that they held no preconceived notions as to what product might be produced. Sousa Abreu was familiar with the content of the reftel papers and said they matched concerns from his own office and the Portuguese Ministry of Defense.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: We defer to the experts on both the issues and the processes involved in the cluster munitions discussions and we look forward to Washington guidance on GGE leadership. We have an excellent relationship with Sousa Abreu and appreciate his providing advance warning of the EU's planned demarche in Washington. End comment.

¶5. (U) Begin informal translation of the text of the diplomatic note:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Director General for Foreign Policy
Security and Defense Department

DSD 001161
10.12.2007

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and has the honor

to inform that Ambassador Jose Julio Pereira Gomes, Portuguese Permanent Representative for Disarmament Affairs, has been asked, as representative of the Western Group, to take over the Presidency of the Group of Government Experts on cluster munitions within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

The above invitation was transmitted by Ambassador Bernhard Brasack, German Permanent Representative to the Disarmament Conference and Coordinator of the Western Group within the framework of the referred Convention, with the backing of all EU countries.

The Portuguese Government decided to authorize Ambassador Jose Julio Pereira Gomes to accept this invitation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to reiterate to the Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.

Lisbon, December 10, 2007

End text.

Stephenson